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THIS WEEK'S NEWS FROM

Inside Washington Disinf the Washing

The scandal that has hit the *Washington Post*, dubbed "Pulitzergate" by some, has focused attention on how easy it could be for agents of a hostile foreign power to manipulate and even infiltrate influential newspapers such as the *Post*.

"How do editors know that they don't have on their staff people that are agents of a foreign power?" asked Reed Irvine, chairman of Accuracy in Media (AIM), on a radio program in Washington, D.C. "If the *Post* doesn't make a check to see whether the reporters have the academic credentials they claim, how do they know if the reporter is working for the KGB?"

Arnaud de Borchgrave, former chief foreign correspondent for *Newsweek* and co-author with Robert Moss of *The Spike*, the best-selling novel about Soviet disinformation activities in the West, told HUMAN EVENTS: "If a palpably phony story can get through their fail-safe system, you can imagine how much easier it is to get a more subtle brand of disinformation through."

Since the advent of the Reagan Administration, the *Post* has featured a number of stories that could be viewed as "disinformation"—false, incomplete or misleading information about Communist operations and objectives.

For instance, in reporting on President Reagan's statement at his first news conference that Soviet leaders are still seeking world domination, *Post* reporter Lee Lescaze quoted unnamed "Soviet experts" as saying that "the appeals for world revolution and a one-world Communist state which were issued frequently through the era of Nikita Khrushchev disappeared from Soviet leaders' speeches in the mid-1960s."

Lescaze consulted the wrong experts. He should have gone to Leonid Brezhnev himself. In his report to the 24th Communist Party Congress in 1971, Brezhnev said: "The Communist party of the Soviet Union will continue to pursue a line in international affairs which helps further to invigorate the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle. . . . The full triumph of the Socialist cause all over the world is inevitable, and we shall not spare ourselves in the fight for this triumph."

In a letter to the
Robert Conquest pe
Minister Andrei Gro

Communist Party subordinates all its theoretical and practical activity in the sphere of international relations to the task of strengthening the positions of socialism, and in the interests of further developing and deepening the world revolutionary process."

Conquest added: "It is alas true that 'Soviet experts' can be found in the West to obfuscate the point, but there are even 'experts' here who talk of the USSR's 'pluralist' political system."

After Secretary of State Alexander Haig charged that the Soviet Union was a primary sponsor of international terrorism, the *Post* published an opinion piece—although it wasn't labeled as such—by Michael Getler entitled, "Soviets and Terrorist Activity: World of Shadow and Shading," which tried to cast doubt on Haig's charges. Getler made two distinctions frequently made by the Soviets and their apologists.

First, Getler questioned whether the PLO was a terrorist organization, noting that some countries "view the Palestinians as insurgents rather than terrorists." Second, Getler said Haig had not distinguished between terrorist groups and "the more politically motivated insurgencies and liberation movements that may also use terror tactics. . . ." The Soviets, of course, deny supporting terrorists, but they boast of their support for "national liberation struggles."

To its credit, however, the *Post* later published on its op-ed page a column by Arnaud de Borchgrave and Michael Ledeen, the executive editor of *The Washington Quarterly*, on Soviet support for terrorism. "A great abundance of evidence shows that a great deal of the blood being spilled by terrorists all over the world is the responsibility of the Russians," they said, citing many examples.

Post reporter Getler mentioned in his article the new book by Claire Sterling, *The Terror Network*, which thoroughly documents the Soviet role in terrorism (see review, page 14). The *Washington Post Magazine* later published an excerpt from the Sterling book. However, the *Post* tried to "balance"